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21 October 1958

Copy No. C 59

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



DOCUMENT NO. 34
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. X
DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS, S, C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: 2016
AUTH: 4480
DATE: 4/4/80 REVIEWER:

State Dept. review completed

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Approved For Release 2002/09/04 : CIA-RDP79T00975A004000340001-9

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

21 October 1958

DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

OK
USSR-France: Presumably as a result of a Soviet appraisal of the French referendum results and De Gaulle's Algeria policy, Moscow has agreed to proceed with certain previously stalled French-Soviet negotiations and has apparently assured French officials that the USSR will not recognize the Algerian rebel regime in the near future.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

OK Thailand: Resignation of the Thanom cabinet, abrogation of the constitution, and establishment of a "revolutionary council" headed by Marshal Sarit are the initial steps in the imposition of a more authoritarian regime by the ruling military group. Sarit thus appears to have exercised firm control over the group, which has been increasingly torn by factionalism in the last few weeks.

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DAILY BRIEF

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Soviet Attitude Toward De Gaulle

The USSR has agreed to resume negotiations with France on economic and cultural relations which had been stalled for some time, according to the French ambassador in Moscow. Trade talks proposed by France a month ago are expected to begin next week, and the ambassador also hinted that France had received assurances that the USSR would not recognize the Algerian rebel regime in the near future. These developments apparently stem from an assessment of the post-referendum situation in France and De Gaulle's initial Algerian policy.

Soviet propaganda against the Paris government has fallen off sharply, and earlier attacks on De Gaulle's "personal dictatorship" have not been repeated. The Paris Communist L'Humanité published an article from a Czech periodical which criticized Algerian terrorist activities in France, and Moscow radio has devoted considerable attention to a speech by French Communist leader Thorez which stressed the peaceful role of the French party in leading the democratic elements in France against the "reactionary forces."

These developments suggest that the Soviet leaders are still hopeful De Gaulle will alter France's relationship with NATO and pursue a more nationalistic policy. Moscow probably believes that De Gaulle's views on such issues as a nuclear test cessation agreement and future high-level talks on the Taiwan Strait crisis will provide further opportunities for Soviet exploitation.

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II. ASIA-AFRICA

Sarit Establishes "Revolutionary Council" in Thailand

The establishment of a Thai "revolutionary council" under Marshal Sarit on 20 October has been followed by the dissolution of the National Assembly and the abrogation of the Constitution. Sarit will rule by decree pending the drafting of a new constitution which would restrict the power of elected legislators. The military group has long been chafing under the need to satisfy with money and other favors the demands of elected civilian elements within the government party and the assembly.

Since the communiqués announcing the "revolutionary council" laid great emphasis on the threat of Communism, Sarit probably has ordered a roundup of suspected Thai and Chinese Communists in the Bangkok area as window-dressing justifying the action his group has taken.

Sarit returned to Bangkok last week end amid reports of increased tension within the ruling clique centering around the growing personal rivalry between Generals Thanom and Prapat, who were premier and interior minister respectively in the cabinet which resigned just before the "revolutionary council" was established. Sarit seems to have thrown his influence behind Thanom, and may take advantage of the present emergency to downgrade Prapat, whose [redacted] growing power caused much of the friction within the military group. Trouble could start if Sarit tries to cut too deeply into Prapat's empire, although Sarit gives every indication of being firmly in control. [redacted]

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